

Addison!

Performing and Visual Arts Committee

Recommendations

May 2007

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Performing and Visual Arts Committee

The charge of this committee is to review realistic and “out of the box” options for providing an inviting, affordable and sustainable arts environment for residents and visitors to attend in Addison. Areas to be researched include: theater, music, art, film and design elements that identify the uniqueness that is Addison.

Committee Members:

Jay Ihrig - Co-Facilitator
Shirley Kay
Robert Mayer, Jr.

Janet Meyer – Facilitator
Mary Jo Nelms
Lori Ward

Throughout this process, the committee functioned as a “**think tank**” to discuss ideas for the visual and performing arts, and to narrow the focus to those “**big ideas**” to short range (or immediate), medium range and long term goals for incorporation into future Town of Addison planning.

Short Range Goals

1. Lights

Definition of Light:

Something that makes vision possible*

The Committee recommends the Town of Addison develop a significant lighting project to “**brand**” the identity of the Town as well as to project energy, excitement and warmth, and to enhance all of the identified elements. This is a cost-effective way to make a huge impact on the personality and character of the Town.

Initial Goals:

- Blue is a color that is already uniquely identified with the Town through the Blueprints of Addison sculpture and the Arapaho expansion bridge. For this reason it is logical to use it as the main color of the project.
- Utilization of the existing infrastructure at Addison Circle Park to have a major light display that is an easily changed work of art
- Initial installation of lighting at major gateways to guide people in Addison
- Use of directional and up lighting on architectural elements of buildings and landscaping, including water features (existing and future)

Ongoing Goals:

- Use of light display to create exciting events in the park
 - Short, frequent displays are a reason for people to gather
 - Longer elaborate displays a few times a year become major events.
- Significant lighting of Blue Prints of Addison sculpture

Webster's Third New International Dictionary, Unabridged Edition, p. 1308, Copyright 1986, G&C Merriam Co.

- Permanent light sculpture to anchor major areas of the Town
- Use of “**Addison Lights**” theme to enhance other projects
 - “**Addison Lights**” the arts, music, restaurants, theater, education, and whatever event is happening
 - Lighting the public art projects the committee is also recommending

2. Art Exhibition Space

Perhaps the most discussed “out of the box” topic of this committee is the inclusion of art exhibition and artist studio space in Addison – primarily as a part of the reinvention of Addison Circle. The committee identified the large amount of continually vacant retail space at Addison Circle as a perfect location for use as short term art exhibition and artist studios during times that the space is not leased. This would provide a much needed boost to the Addison art community, which surprisingly is a fairly significant group of practicing artists, collectors and supporters of the arts. It would also provide a destination for residents and visitors to Addison events at Addison Circle with additional activities to encourage use of the Circle at times other than just special events (i.e. Kaboom Town, ArtFest, Taste of Addison).

While the committee frequently requested a representative from Post Properties to speak before our committee, it did not happen. However, we did learn from Sheri Jacque, Executive Director of the Craft Guild of Dallas, that her organization has over 800 members who are practicing artists within the area. Her organization has a desire to be an active member of the Addison community, including the possible move to Addison, if a facility of 15,000 square feet could be secured.

Should the Craft Guild of Dallas move to Addison, this would provide an immediate base of artists for gallery shows, arts and craft fairs, and children’s art camps for Addison. Ms. Jacque advised the committee that the Dallas Craft Guild, founded in 1948, by local artists with an emphasis on preserving the traditional arts (metal craft, clay and book binding), is self-sufficient and operates with one paid staffer, and a volunteer Board of Directors. Its 800 members pay a fee of \$50.00 annually for membership.

In addition, the Guild has an active children’s arts program which could be a great tie in with the Town of Addison’s Athletic Club programming; hosts annual juried arts festivals in November with exhibitions and sales; and with additional studio space, could expand it’s arts instruction and work space. At the immediate time, the Guild estimates that there are approximately 90 practicing artists that would be interested in gallery exhibition and production space.

Medium Range Goal

1. Movie Theater

Presently, there is not a movie theater in Addison and especially nothing west of the Tollway until CineMark in Dallas and smaller venues in Carrollton or Plano. Both Plano and Dallas have successfully incorporated movie theaters (i.e. Angelika and Magnolia) into the community and brought in restaurants along with specialized shopping that attracts people attending these film venues. It is important to note that **there is much Addison resident interest** in seeing a theatre in Addison, both as a destination and as an adjunct to dining before or after the film.

Resident input has centered on limited release, independent and classic films, similar to those shown by an Angelika or Magnolia theater. Committee and resident perception is that Addison needs to reinvent Addison Circle or the Village on the Parkway as locations for a theater.

In addition, the committee looked at Legacy Centre in Plano as an excellent example of positive use of both residential and retail space, coupled with smaller restaurants and specialty stores that are open hours that would allow for access before and after a film. As an Addison unique idea, the committee discussed that food could be served at the theater on a gourmet level of quality rather than traditional theater popcorn and a soft drink.

In addition, placement of a movie theater at Addison Circle would be a catalyst for rethinking the uses of Addison Circle, allowing it to grow into a more dynamic destination for residents and visitors. It will also serve as an incubator for restaurants and specialty stores, and will encourage positive change to enable Addison Circle to keep competitive with the ever changing neighborhoods and Class A business locations of Dallas and the northern suburbs.

2. Public Art

Public art, throughout the history of civilization, is used to enhance the prestige of communities, instill civic pride among their residents and to attract visitors and new residents, along with their skills and money, for the betterment of all concerned. Successful communities, like the Town of Addison, are closely identified by their public art works.

Public art appeals to the widest range of its audience's interests and understanding; yet intrigues and excites with surprise and discovery. The committee considered the following specific ideas:

- Public art in Addison to include landscape art placed in areas of entry into Addison and at various focal points around the town. Landscaping of **surprise parks** which might include low hedge mazes – both curving and angular – and taller hedges forming screens; these formations would be augmented with sculpted figures (depicting a single cohesive theme or varying from one area to another) and accent lighting.
- The committee also heard recommendations to extend and expand the ideas and options for public art in Addison. Practicing artists would be invited to propose ideas. In addition, the Town might draw upon the creative talents offered by students from area high schools and university art departments. North Texas students could submit their ideas for public art in Addison by the way of a local organized competition.

Final determination and selection of public art projects for Addison would enable a wider range of options than this committee has proposed. Public art often defines a community, and the residents of Addison define our community as unique. Thus, public art in Addison should likewise present that quality of uniqueness that distinguishes the Town of Addison.

Long Range Goal

WaterTower Theatre

Background:

WaterTower Theatre is but one consideration for this committee. Prior to the establishment of the CAC committee – the Town entered into an agreement with an outside consulting firm to look at the various possibilities and options open to the Town for the revitalization of the WaterTower Theatre.

The committee looked at a number of uses for WaterTower Theatre:

Short Range Plans:

Identify multiple uses for the expanded theater space:

- Musical and dance events
- Lecture series, book reviews and classes/workshops
- Seniors activity space
- Children's summer camp programming
- Art galleries inside WaterTower
- Expanded programming as a **multi-purpose performance facility**

Medium Range Plans:

- Act on recommendations from WaterTower Theatre consultant Robert Long.

Background:

Robert Long is a theater consultant who worked on the original study of WaterTower Theatre and has been hired to do a study on the options regarding expansion of Water Tower Theatre. He has worked on designing performing arts buildings for the past 30 years including programming and design at the Meyerson Center, as well as performing arts centers in Richardson, Irving, Austin, Sale Lake City, Orlando and Charlotte.

He provided an example from the City of Providence, Rhode Island, which decided to have a downtown arts focus about 10 years ago to encourage artists to live, work and exhibit in downtown Providence – and this effort has been very successful. The Rhode Island School of Design served as an anchor for this concept.

WaterTower Theatre Study:

WaterTower's future needs include:

- A larger performance space (i.e. approx. 400-500 seats)
- A larger shop to create backgrounds, props, etc.
- Some additional office space

Location:

Two sites identified as preferable: near the existing theatre and south of the Arts and Events District (just south of Festival Way). Other sites that were explored included the northeast corner of Quorum and Arapaho and the Service Merchandise Building. The criteria used included:

- Visibility
- Cost
- Availability of parking nearby
- Impact on neighborhood
- Amenities

Committee members inquired if there was an advantage to having the two performance spaces close together – Mr. Long responded that there are some efficiencies, but not enough to make a tremendous impact.

Ron Whitehead was interested in having future office buildings include performing arts space in them when they are designed – to expand our opportunities for performance space.

Robert Long discussed the importance of creating a Comprehensive Cultural Arts Master Plan.

Ron Whitehead suggested that a comprehensive cultural master plan might be a good idea for the committee to consider that answers the question: “What does Addison want to be in 25 years?” He suggested that we need to consider all types of arts including museums in this study.

Committee members asked if the size of a future performance space has been determined. Robert Long stated that the seat count has not been finalized because it is a struggle between selling out and controlling costs, but he is looking at the 400-500 seat theatre concepts. He stated that it is also difficult for theatre companies to make the transition to a larger space. He stated that a 500 seat theatre also offers the community good touring company performances as well as the opportunity to host other types of performances such as classical music, dance, etc.

Robert Long also suggested that such a design also include space for an education department that could meet the needs of many ages. He stated that an educational facility could be a stand-alone facility.

Committee members inquired about vacant space in the Addison Circle area if Post Properties could use vacant store fronts for gallery space. Robert Long told of a children’s museum in Chapel Hill, North Carolina called Kidzu that was very popular and drew a large number of families. Kidzu had outgrown their space, when an area mall lost an anchor tenant the mall offered up the vacant space (approx. 15,000 square feet) because they realized that Kidzu would draw traffic to the mall while they were looking for a new tenant. This was successful partnership that benefited both organizations.

The committee made contact with a representative from the Dallas Museum of Art (DMA) regarding a visiting artists program with gallery displays at Town facilities and locating literary and performing arts to Addison. DMA advised that they have an agreement with the Eisemann Center in Richardson, but have currently not looked at northern Dallas venues such as Addison. This is something the committee believes should be explored further with DMA to bring visual and performing artists to Addison.

Discussion was held regarding a larger theatre for WaterTower Theatre. The initial thought was to use this larger theatre for two shows per year and to fill in with road shows, concerts, seminars and other performances the rest of the time. WaterTower Theatre would gradually increase the number of shows produced in larger space while continuing to use the existing theatre – but that it might take up to 20 years to fully move into the larger theatre. It was suggested considering having a playwright in residence program – and partnering with an Addison hotel to provide a room during their stay.

All committee members felt strongly that WaterTower Theatre, when expanded, should be designated as a **multi-purpose and performance facility** not just for theatrical events.

- Funding for the expansion of WaterTower Theatre would come from a future bond election

Final Recommendation

1% For the Arts of All Capital Projects

Committee members reviewed funding sources from a number of Texas communities that actively support the arts. The two best in our region, Frisco and Plano (see attachments), use the funding formula that 1% of all capital projects are earmarked for arts acquisition. New Mexico has also used a similar statewide funding formula for years that has allowed a world class art collection to be presented and housed in the Albuquerque International Airport; bridges designed as art pieces combined with free standing large scale sculptures; and funding for performance artists to pursue their craft.

Establishing a 1% set aside of all capital projects for the arts will allow Addison to fund and maintain arts projects for today and the future.

(See attachments)

Summary

The Performing and Visual Arts Committee recommends to the Town of Addison Council the following **“big ideas”** for consideration:

1. Addison lights to identify the uniqueness that is Addison
2. Exhibition and studio space for artists
3. Inclusion of a movie theater at Addison Circle or Village on the Parkway
4. Public art expansion and creation of “surprise parks” as part of the Belt Line Road redesign and redevelopment of other Addison parks
5. Design and redevelop WaterTower Theatre as a multi-purpose performance facility

While the committee understands that all project recommendations will not be funded, it is hoped that the Council will include the committee’s basic concepts in future plans for the ongoing development of Addison.